



4510-24-P

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

Bureau of Labor Statistics

Information Collection Activities; Comment Request

AGENCY: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Department of Labor

ACTION: Notice of information collection; request for comment.

SUMMARY: The Department of Labor, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, conducts a pre-clearance consultation program to provide the general public and Federal agencies with an opportunity to comment on proposed and/or continuing collections of information in accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995. This program helps to ensure that requested data can be provided in the desired format, reporting burden (time and financial resources) is minimized, collection instruments are clearly understood, and the impact of collection requirements on respondents can be properly assessed. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is soliciting comments concerning the proposed extension of the "National Compensation Survey." A copy of the proposed information collection request can be obtained by contacting the individual listed below in the Addresses section of this notice.

DATES: Written comments must be submitted to the office listed in the Addresses section of this notice on or before **[INSERT DATE 60 DAYS AFTER DATE OF PUBLICATION IN THE FEDERAL REGISTER]**.

ADDRESSES: Send comments to Nora Kincaid, BLS Clearance Officer, Division of Management Systems, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Room 4080, 2 Massachusetts Avenue, N.E., Washington, DC 20212. Written comments also may be transmitted by email to BLS_PRA_Public@bls.gov.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Nora Kincaid, BLS Clearance Officer, at 202-691-7628 (this is not a toll free number.) (See Addresses section.)

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background

The National Compensation Survey (NCS) is an ongoing survey of earnings and benefits among private firms, State, and local government. Data from the NCS program include estimates of wages covering broad groups of related occupations, and data that directly links benefit plan costs with detailed plan provisions. The NCS is used to produce the Employment Cost Trends, including the Employment Cost Index (ECI) and Employer Costs for Employee Compensation (ECEC), employee benefits data (on coverage, cost, and provisions), and data used by the President's Pay Agent. This data is used by compensation administrators and researchers in the public and private sectors. Data from the NCS are used to help in determining monetary policy (as a Principal Federal Economic Indicator.) The integrated program's single sample produces both time-series indexes and cost levels for industry and occupational groups, thereby increasing the analytical potential of the data.

The NCS employs probability methods for selection of occupations. This ensures that sampled occupations represent all occupations in the workforce, while minimizing the reporting burden on respondents. The survey collects data from a sample of employers. These data will consist of information about the duties, responsibilities, and compensation (earnings and benefits) for a sample of occupations for each sampled employer. Data will be updated on a quarterly basis. The updates will allow for production of data on change in earnings and total compensation.

II. Current Action

Office of Management and Budget clearance is being sought for a extension of the National Compensation Survey. This survey was revised to temporarily add questions to the National Compensation Survey to cover sick leave policy changes due to the coronavirus pandemic. These questions will be collected primarily through email in June and July of 2020. These data were approved for collection under Emergency OMB Clearance Package 1220-0195, which expires on November 30, 2020.

Respondents will electronically complete and submit responses through a simple fillable form. The additional sick leave policy questions are not intended to be collected beyond the July timeframe.

At this time, BLS has discontinued in person data collection in response to the coronavirus pandemic. NCS will return to using in person interviews as a method of collection once restrictions are lifted. During this time, the NCS is relying heavily on

telephone, email, and mail for current collection. Video interview collection is also available in response to the pandemic and is being considered as a standard collection method.

The NCS collects earnings and work level data on occupations for the nation. The NCS also collects information on the cost, provisions, and incidence of major employee benefits through its benefit cost and benefit provision programs and publications. BLS has for a number of years been using a revised approach to the Locality Pay Survey (LPS) component of the NCS; this uses data from two current BLS programs - the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey and the ECI program. This approach uses OES data to provide wage data by occupation and by area, while ECI data are used to specify grade level effects. This approach is also being used to extend the estimation of pay gaps to areas that were not included in the prior Locality Pay Survey sample, and these data have been delivered to the Pay Agent (in 2019, data for 95 areas were delivered).

The NCS has a national survey design for the ECI and the EBS. The NCS private industry sample is on a three-year rotational cycle, with one frozen sample year every ten years for the NCS private industry sample when a new NCS State and local government sample starts (approximately in 2025).

The NCS continues to provide employee benefit provision and participation data. These data include estimates of how many

workers receive the various employer-sponsored benefits. The data also include information about the common provisions of benefit plans.

NCS collection will use a number of collection forms (normally having unique private industry and government initiation and update collection forms and versions). For NCS update collection, the forms or screens give respondents their previously reported information, the dates they expected change to occur to these data, and space for reporting these changes. The NCS for electronic collection uses a Web-based system (Web-Lite) that allows NCS respondents, using Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) encryption and the establishment's schedule number, to upload data files to a secure BLS server that forwards those files to the assigned BLS field economist.

Some benefits (called "Other benefits") data are collected to track the emergence of new or changing benefits over time. The BLS only asks whether sampled occupations receive these benefits and periodically modifies this list.

III. Desired Focus of Comments

The Bureau of Labor Statistics is particularly interested in comments that:

- Evaluate whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information will have practical utility.

- Evaluate the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed collection of information, including the validity of the methodology and assumptions used.
- Enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected.
- Minimize the burden of the collection of information on those who are to respond, including through the use of appropriate automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g., permitting electronic submissions of responses.

Title of Collection: National Compensation Survey.

OMB Number: 1220-0164.

Type of Review: Extension of a currently approved collection.

Affected Public: Businesses or other for-profit; not-for-profit institutions; and State, local, and tribal government.

Total Respondents: 15,863 (three-year average).

All figures are based on a three-year average. The total responses are higher as some respondents are contacted multiple times.

	Respondents	Average responses Per year	Total # of responses	Average minutes	Total hours
Three-year average	15863	3.1342	49,717	53.0736	43,978

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized

and/or included in the request for Office of Management and Budget approval of the information collection request; they also will become a matter of public record.

Signed at Washington, DC, this 5th day of June 2020.

Mark Staniorski,

Chief, Division of Management Systems.

[FR Doc. 2020-12630 Filed: 6/10/2020 8:45 am; Publication Date: 6/11/2020]